

Star Wards Newsletter – March 2016



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March 2016

NEWSLETTER

Hello Fabulous Members!

Welcome back to the latest edition of Imagine, the Star Wards Newsletter dedicated to our members!

In this bumper Spring edition of Imagine you will find: *Pointless National Holidays for Spring, A Feature on 'Youth Buddy', Spring Time Activities, News From Star Wards HQ including Academy of Fabulous NHS Stuff and Animal Magic!*

Do you have an inspirational idea you would like to share with our community of Star Wards Members? Please get in touch! We'd love to showcase your great practice on our website Wardipedia and in this newsletter so that thousands of others people can be inspired by and benefit from these.



A Few Words from Marion

What's that outside? Goodness – it's SPRING. When did that happen? I didn't read the memo!

It's probably because I have been absorbed with the Star Wards team in developing our new resources with short breaks to read the new reports on acute care from the Acute Care Commission and the review of mental health chaired by the wonderful Paul Farmer.

I'm not going to go into detail about the reports (there are lots of clever people who've already done that), but I did note that both recognise the importance of helping staff rather than blaming staff. Take this example from the "Old Problems. New Solutions", the Acute Care Commission report

"Successful improvement methods engage and empower the people who are actually delivering the care as well as patients and carers in shaping the changes, because they are best placed to know what needs to be improved, how to improve it and where the waste and inefficiencies are."

So true! It's YOU, our wonderful members, who will (and do) improve care. The report even lists Star Wards as one of the ways to improve care – but I'll leave Sam to tell you about that later.

The "Five Year Forward" report from the independent Mental Health Taskforce even has a chapter about the workforce that includes:

"It goes without saying that people seeking NHS care need to be treated with compassion. But what is sometimes forgotten is that staff do too. The care they receive impacts on the care they are able to deliver."

Exactly. That's why we care for you – because you care for the most vulnerable and do it so well.

Buddy and I are particularly enthusiastic about all the imaginative ways in which staff enable patients to have more contact with animals. Whether it's a visiting PAT dog or encouraging patients to put up photos of their pets, these all really help patient morale and motivation. Our forthcoming Animal Magic website is packed with inspiring examples and practical ideas.

Have a lovely spring and don't spend it all reading reports! Enjoy the daffodils, crazy weather and have fun.

Love Marion

Pointless National Days

We've scrabbled together

this list for you...



These Pointless National Holidays look wondrous! That's 10 points towards your score on 'Scrabble Day' (13th April), just one of the examples of Pointless National Holidays you could use; as a conversation starter, start a themed ward day or as part of your therapeutic on-ward activity sessions?



26th March,
Make Up Your Own Holiday Day,

25th April,
East meets West Day,

9th April,
Lost Sock Memorial Day

Here are more examples of Pointless National Holidays on www.wardipedia.org.uk, or have you created your own National day on your ward? Please share them with us! Get in touch with Sam–[here](#).



Word From The Wards!

'We're loving youth buddy!'

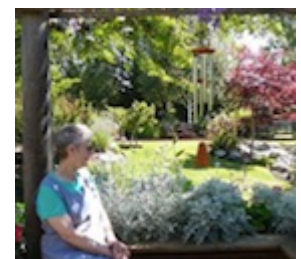
Last November our Geoff visited Ash Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) ward based in Kent. Staff on the ward there they have been extremely creative in taking the resource 'Ward Buddy' as a template and creating their own electronic version, which is available to the young people on the ward on electronic tablets. More about Geoff's visit and the wonderful staff and patients at Ash Ward can be found in our [blog section](#) of the Star Wards website.

Spring Activities

Finding time for therapeutic activities can seem like a big task. No need to be daunted! Here are a few examples of activities that you can try that are easy to start and fun to do!

A Ward in Bloom

It's Spring Time, the time of year when Daffodils start fill the garden borders and there's the signs of frost on the ground. Even when it's cold outside, brilliant and bright displays of flowers, shrubs and herbs can fill the ward with lovely sight and smells. Gardening has a wonderful effect; it can give a sense of control, provide exercise and relieve stress. For tips, hints and examples here is a link to our [Wardipedia page dedicated to 'Green Therapy'](#).



Anyone for Cake?

Going from being creative in the garden to getting messy in the kitchen!

The best part about any food activity on a ward is you can eat it at the end. On our dedicated Wardipedia page, '[Food Presentation](#)', you can find a whole bunch of handy tips about how to make food look and taste more attractive. Everything from that humble piece of morning toast to a large slice of cake can get a full make over!



If your ward does not have a kitchen for activities, have no fear! With a bit of preparation, you can use any table available on the ward, a dining room table will do, or even borrow the nursing desk (but..please ask first!).

For more tips, hints and examples here is a link to our Wardipedia page dedicated to '[Food Presentation](#)'.



News From Star Wards HQ

All in the Mind Awards

The All in the Mind awards celebrate those individuals, projects or groups that have gone above and beyond the call of duty to offer the support or advice that made a real difference to the life of an individual currently or previously affected by mental health difficulties.

This year's awards judging panel includes none other than our Marion! To promote the awards Buddy and Marion recently starred in a video called '[She's not just a pet](#)', here is a link to Buddy's short feature film!

Although the closing date for applications has now passed, do look (or as its radio listen!) out for the winners. Their stories will be moving and inspiring and it's always great when there's public recognition for the exceptional work of mental health professionals, and others.

Animal Magic

Marion's support dog Buddy has been to many, many wards and is always a most welcome visitor.

The joy she brings to patients and the HUGE evidence base about the benefits of contact with animals have resulted in a new website called Animal Magic. We're going to be launching this later this year and it's full of ideas for ways in which wards can help patients have contact with animals, including their own pets. Here's an at-a-glance summary of the main ways in which this can happen.



Here's what she looks like upright!

We've got lots of brilliant examples of how wards are helping patients have contact with animals – even fairly simple things like encouraging patients to put up photos of their pets can make a big difference. We'd love even more examples so please do send us your stories – and we'd also really appreciate photos (without humans, to avoid confidentiality issues) that we can include in the website. Please send your examples, stories, photos, ideas etc to [Geoff](#).

And big thanks to Andy Hesketh, Claire Williams, Pam Grimes, Mark Gingell and Sandra Martin for letting us Facebook and tweet pics of Gromit, Gnasher, Bagpuss, Charlie, Jerry, Bramble and Roger the Rabbit! Join the [Star Wards Facebook Group](#).

Meet a snowy Charlie, who looks after Andy Hesketh from Lancashire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (right).



Which leads nicely on to...**National Pet Month**.

Here at Star Wards, we love any pet news! In January this year we tweeted a video about 'National Pet Month' which runs from April 1st till May 2nd in 2016. National Pet Month in 2016 will be raising awareness and funds for pet charities across the UK, as well as promoting responsible pet ownership.

In our September newsletter we featured how low key, low cost and effective pet visitors on a ward can be. Pets as Therapy Animals (PAT) are a really valuable therapeutic resource.

For more information about having pet visits on your ward. Follow us at [@wardipedianews](#), helpful tips can be found on our dedicated page on Wardipedia by following this link; [6.Animals](#). To find out more information about 'National Pet Month' they have a dedicated twitter page [@NatPetMonthUK](#).

Mental Health Inpatient Care Rocks!

The Academy of Fabulous NHS Stuff, recently dedicated a page to celebrate all the examples great practice that has been shared with us by you, our members! The piece about Wardipedia was added to their wonderful 'academy' resource which is designed to share all the amazing work that goes on across wards each day. The Academy resource loves to share their good news about the innovative and creative work of ward workers via their website and twitter. Here is the piece about Wardipedia named '[Mental Health Inpatient Care Rocks!](#)'



Acute Care Report

Marion mentioned that Star Wards was mentioned in the recently published Acute Care Report. The Commission of Acute Adult Psychiatric Care set up by the Royal College of Psychiatrists compiled this report which was designed to look at acute inpatient psychiatric beds and alternatives to admissions.

Here at Star Wards we were very proud to be included in their report called 'Old Problems, New Solutions'. We felt proud as it highlighted that you are members who strive to make even small

changes to the patient experience of wards had a real positive effect on the patient during their admission and beyond!

The feature is under the section 'Patients and Carers' on Page 73 of the report, <http://www.caapc.info>

Blog - 'You Say Star Wards, I Say Safe Wards'



Our Geoff has been tip tapping away at his keyboard to create a brilliant blog featuring the work of Star Wards and Safe Wards, who are our sibling in the great family of mental health improvement.

You can find [Geoff's blog here](#).

We're All Ears!

**As part of our Community Newsletter,
we would like to connect with you!**

Please do get in touch, you can even write to us with a Guest Blog of your experiences of mental health wards or Star Wards.

[Click here to contact us](#)

Ask Buddy!

Our brand new feature for our wonderful current (or potential!) members allows you to ask 'Buddy' a question!

Buddy's paws are ready to tap away and provide you with an answer to those questions you have about Star Wards on your ward. If we cannot find an answer for you we may be able to find you a fellow Star Wards community member (there's over 600 of you!) that may well have an answer.



Buddy really enjoys receiving your questions! She has the waggy tail to prove it. Buddy recently received a question on Facebook page, our Facebook members and Geoff helped answer the question for Buddy.

Question:

Hello Buddy,

Please can you advise me what is available when becoming a star wards member and what benefits you have found on your ward? What difficulties have you come across?

Richard

Answer:

Hi Richard, thank you for your question. It's lovely to hear from you!

Richard, joining Star Wards is free! One of the great benefits in joining our family of members is to get involved with the networks of people - like activities champions - that talk to each other, sharing their experience and ideas about Star Wards and therapeutic activities from their wards.

For more information on the benefits of Star Wards, take a look at our [Facebook group](#) where brilliant Star Wards Members share questions and answers. Have a look at the stuff on the Star Wards website and newsletters. Oh, and do look at our Wardipedia website, it full of handy tips and info.

Most of all Richard, stay positive! Pitfalls of space to do with groups and staff time can always be overcome by being a little creative. The smallest therapeutic activity can have a massive effect for a service user.

Buddy (and friends!)

If you would like to find out Buddy's suggestions to this question or alternatively we also have a FAQ section about Star Wards, so be sure to check that out as well on our website. [click here](#).

Please submit your questions to [Sam](#) (being a bit of a celeb, Buddy doesn't always get a lot of time to check her email so Sam lends a hand).

We're thrilled that you're a Star Wards member and we want you to know how deeply impressed we are by all the creative, therapeutic work you do. We hope you've found ideas in this newsletter which you'll want to introduce today!

Love,
Marion,
Nic, Geoff
& Sam

